

Message Text

SECRET

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44

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

SS-20 USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 AID-20 DRC-01 /175 W

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R 271015Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5325

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

S E C R E T KINSHASA 9246

E.O. 11652: XGDS (3)

TAGS: PINT, CG

SUBJ: MOBUTU AND ZAIRE'S "PERSONALITY CULT"

REF: KINSHASA A-192 OF OCT 30, 1973

1. REFERENCE AIRGRAM REPORTS MOBUTU'S RECENT PRESS COMMENTS IN RESPONSE TO JEUNE AFRIQUE'S SHARP QUESTION CONCERNING LENGTH TO WHICH CULT OF PERSONALITY BEING CARRIED HERE. IT ALSO REPORTS MOBUTU'S SIGNIFICANT REMARKS ON ROLE OF ZAIRIAN LEADERSHIP WHICH HE MADE TO TOP OFFICIALS WHEN THEY CALLED OCT 14 TO WISH HIM HAPPY BIRTHDAY.

2. IT IS TRUE THAT MOST WESTERNERS ARE STRUCK AND REPELLED BY THE HYPERBOLE USUALLY LAVISHED ON MOBUTU BY THE MEDIA HERE. HE IS EXTOLLED AS THE "CLAIRVOYANT GUIDE", "FATHER OF THE COUNTRY", AND EVEN "SAVIOR". DESPITE ALL OF THIS, IN LENGTHY TETE-A-TETES WITH MOBUTU, MOST RECENTLY DURING HIS LAST US TRIP, I HAVE FOUND HIM STILL TO BE THE COOL, PRAGMATIC LEADER THAT WE ARE ACCUSTOMED TO DEALING WITH.

3. A RELIABLE SOURCE TOLD ME THAT ON THE BIRTHDAY OCCASION REFERED TO ABOVE, BISENGIMANA, DIRECTOR OF THEPRESIDENT'S OFFICE, IN HIS REMARKS NOTED THAT THE TASK OF HIMSELF AND THE PRESIDENCY WAS TO ASSIST THE PRESIDENT

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IN REACHING AND IMPLEMENTING DECISIONS RATHER THAN

FLATTERY. MININFO SAKOMBI, ZAIRE'S NO. 1 SYCOPHANT,
REPORTEDLY INTERPRETED THIS AS CRITICISM AND OFFERED
TO RESIGN, BUT MOBUTU DECIDED TO KEEP HIM ON.

4. SOME OBSERVERS HERE ARE STRUCK BY FACT THAT CONTENTS OF NIGHTLY
TV PROPAGANDA LECTURE WHICH PRECEDES NEWS RECENTLY
HAS CONTAINED FEWER PERSONAL ENCOMIUMS OF MOBUTU.
VANCE

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, PRESIDENT, CHIEF OF STATE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 OCT 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973KINSHA09246
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X3 VANCE
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: KINSHASA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t1973107/aaaaaeyv.tel
Line Count: 69
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: KINSHASA A-192 OF OCT 30, 1973
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 31 JAN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <31-Jan-2002 by martinjw>; APPROVED <20 FEB 2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MOBUTU AND ZAIRE'S "PERSONALITY CULT"
TAGS: PINT, CG, (MOBUTU, SESE SEKO)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005